

## ***THE ONE YEAR BIBLE Reading For November 19:***

### *Ezekiel 39:1-40:27:*

After Ezekiel completes the word about God's ultimate victory in behalf of His people over their enemies (chapter 39), he launches into a vision of a new temple which will close out the book (chapters 40-48). As you read these chapters, you must keep a few truths in mind. First, read these chapters in context. The preceding context has spoken of God working in a new way among His people, a way which speaks of the coming New Covenant and does so in highly figurative language. As such, we should not be surprised to find figurative language in these chapters as well. Second, however we interpret these nine chapters, we must keep in mind the light that fuller Revelation from God sheds upon them. For God's people who are under the New Covenant to return to literal temple-based worship in any way which would be pleasing in the eyes of God seems to be impossible in light of the reality we have discovered in both Old and New Testaments, that the tabernacle and temple (along with their laws and sacrifices) pointed to the real thing, Jesus Christ. For us to return to such worship either in this New Covenant age or the age to come is not something which is viewed as positive by God's Word (Colossians 2:16-17; Hebrews 8-10; Revelation 21:22). Most likely, then, what these chapters are doing, is depicting future realities in the language and forms with which the original recipients would be familiar. Finally, this temple vision counters the vision of chapters 8-11 where the temple has been defiled and God's glory and blessing leave it. God will return His presence and glory to His temple (which is currently comprised of His people, the New Testament Church, 1 Corinthians 6:19; 2 Corinthians 6:6). As you read these chapters, rejoice that the LORD is fashioning us, living stones, as a spiritual house, a temple, in which we will fulfill His covenant purpose of being a people who proclaim His excellencies to the world (1 Peter 2:4-10).

### *James 2:18-3:18:*

In 2:18-26 James finishes his discussion of how our works (actions of a changed life resulting from our salvation) demonstrates our true saving faith. We must keep in mind that this book is instructing believers on how to live a God-honoring, wise life even in the midst of trials.

In 3:1-12 James makes it clear that true faith, the life that is a doer and not merely a hearer of the Word, is one in which we seek to bridle our tongue, which is an indication of our heart. Again, we should not make excuses for an uncontrolled tongue based upon the fact that we are suffering or facing hard times.

In 3:13-18 James instructs us to seek skill for godliness from above which results in peace, gentleness, purity, mercy, sincerity, good fruits, and a harvest of acts which are in keeping with the character of God, i.e. righteousness. This is another way of saying we must turn to the grace of God for the kind of behavior which glorifies God and benefits fellow believers. Though never explicitly stated, behind James' wisdom instructions for those in trial, stands the need for change of heart by God's grace. Without this help from above, which comes through true saving faith, the good works which demonstrate true life will not be present.

*Psalm 118:1-18:*

In this psalm of thanksgiving for God's steadfast love, goodness, and deliverance from enemies, the psalmist affirms that the Lord is on his side as his helper and that it is better to take refuge in Him than trust in man. Is God the one in whom you trust?

*Proverbs 28:2:*

This proverb reminds us of the importance of godly leadership which tends to bring unity and stability. When such leadership is not present, there tends to be much chaos.